

TO STOP RAVAGES OF DREAD DISEASE.

Board of Health Upon Measures for the Prevention of the Spread of Consumption.

TO DESTROY THE BACILLUS.

Inspection of Animal Food, Disinfection of Rooms and Burning or Other Destruction of Discharges from the Lungs Recommended by the Board.

AGAIN the Board of Health of the City of New York sends out its warnings of the communicability of the disease that is the strongest ally of death—pulmonary tuberculosis, or, as it is commonly called, consumption, and its suggestions of the measures that should be employed for the prevention of the spread of the disorder. The Board contemplates no drastic action, such as isolation of patients suffering from pulmonary consumption, but asks the aid of all physicians and of the people generally in its efforts to stop the invasion of the disease, and advises succinctly the means to be employed.

The information, the requests and the advice are contained in the annual report of the Board addressed to Mayor Strong. In brief the Board declares that pulmonary tuberculosis is a preventable disease, is not directly inherited, and is acquired by direct transmission of the tubercle bacillus from the sick to the well, usually by means of dried and pulverized sputa floating in the air, and recommends, to prevent the spread of the disease, a rigid inspection of animal food, a dissemination of knowledge of the fact that every person afflicted with tuberculosis is a source of danger to his associates unless the discharges from the lungs be rendered harmless, and the disinfection of rooms and hospital wards.

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD.

THE Board of Health has recognized the fact that while tuberculosis is unquestionably a communicable disease, yet the liability to its transmission may be so greatly diminished by simple precaution as sharply to separate it from those diseases properly classed as infectious. It is to be remembered that while tuberculosis is always the result of direct infection, yet it is far less readily communicated than such diseases as smallpox and scarlatina, and as a proper sanitary condition can be secured in each case, there is little danger of the transmission of the disease to others. The sanitary supervision of this disease should, therefore, be considered largely on the merits of individual cases and conditions, or of classes of cases and conditions. Thus in its circular of information for consumptives the Health Department has emphasized these facts:

That a person suffering from consumption may, if his sputum be properly cared for, pursue his usual avocation without endangering others; that the disease is often curable, and that early recognition greatly enhances the chances for recovery. As this relative innocuous character of pulmonary tuberculosis is absolutely dependent upon the intelligent observation of simple and obvious measures for the disposal of the sputum, the earlier efforts of the Board were largely either educational or directed to the collection of knowledge regarding such cases, or groups of cases, as seemed to constitute the most serious menace to the welfare of the public.

In furtherance of the plans to check the spread of consumption, it is the earnest wish of the Board of Health that all practicing physicians in this city co-operate with the Board in an intelligent and sustained effort to restrict the ravages of this, the most prevalent and formidable disease with which we have to deal. The work of the gentlemen having the investigation in charge has been most satisfactory, and the thanks of the community are due them for the intelligent, scientific and energetic manner in which they have carried out the work. We hope that in the near future the necessary safeguard advised will be established, and for the safety of the health of the city this cannot be done too soon.

CHARLES G. WILSON,
President of the Board of Health.

THE CAUSE OF CONSUMPTION.

(From the Report of the New York Board of Health.)

TUBERCULOSIS is a distinctly preventable disease. It is not directly inherited. It is acquired by the direct transmission of the tubercle from the sick to the well, usually by means of the dried and pulverized sputum floating as dust in the air.

CONSUMPTION has been steadily on the increase in New York in spite of the efforts of the Board of Health to stay the progress of the disease. In 1894 the number of cases reported was 4,166. In 1895 the number was 5,324. During the year last past the number was 8,334.

In that part of the city in which people live in tenement houses the greatest increase has occurred. The Board attributes the increase to lack of regard for sanitary precautions, particularly to omission to destroy or render harmless the sputum from victims of the disease.

Having given the statistics, the report of the Board tells of the work that has been done to prevent the spread of consumption and the work under consideration for the future.

It has not been the policy of the Health Board to interfere with cases of pulmonary tuberculosis occurring among citizens living in private houses, which are not regarded as an active source of danger to others. The Board has always felt that the greatest source of infection is in the sputum.

Taking this as a basis of necessary action the Board some three years ago caused to be circulated among the various transportation companies of this city placards informing the public not to expectorate on the floors of conveyances. These placards were prominently displayed in the cars. Although this step was in a measure adopted to do away with the obnoxious sight and smell in the cars of the city, it was really suggested by the partial reports then made that the spread of consumption was greatly increased and the health of the public endangered by the spread of disease germs from these very cars.

Health Board's Efforts.
The Health Department has been making every effort for the last few years looking toward the prevention of tuberculosis, as transmitted from animals to human beings, in the field supervision of the milk supply of the city, and in the adoption of measures.

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JOURNAL—
JAN. 15, 1897

TO WAGE WAR ON CONSUMPTION.

City Hospital for Its Victims Needed by Health Officials.

DISEASE IS COMMUNICABLE

The Board's Doctors Want It So Designated and Surveillance Exercised.

20,000 VICTIMS IN THE CITY.

To Watch the Sufferers in Crowded Districts, in the Workshops, and in Public Buildings.

JOURNAL—
JAN. 20, 1897.

CONSUMPTIVES TO BE ISOLATED?

Board of Health Will Check the Dread Disease.

CASES TO BE REPORTED.

Physicians Must Inform of Tubercular Patients.

SO MUST THE HOSPITALS.

Sufferers May Be Separated from the Healthy in Their Homes.

Journal Has Already Called Attention to a Need of Precautionary Measures.

FOR PREVENTION OF THE DISEASE.

THE measures suggested by the New York Board of Health for the prevention of the spread of tuberculosis or consumption are:

First—The security of the public against tubercular meat and milk attended by a system of rigid official inspection of cattle.

Second—The dissemination among the people of the knowledge that every tubercular person may be a source of actual danger to his associates if the discharges from his lungs are not immediately destroyed or rendered harmless.

Third—The careful disinfection of rooms and hospital wards that are occupied or have been occupied by phthisical patients.

ulation and cleansing. It is a constant menace to the welfare of the occupants, whose attempts to maintain salubrious conditions in their homes are rendered, in an important particular, futile, through the vicious practices of others in public places.

Growth of the Disease.

"Aside from these real and, as we believe, important dangers from a sanitary standpoint, the filthy habit of spitting in public places and conveyances is frequently an intolerable nuisance, and should not be permitted in a well regulated and intelligently governed community. This should be abated, as is any other public nuisance which is brought to the attention of this department. That it is simply a habit, and not a necessity, as clearly shown by the large number of men who are free from it,

and the insignificant proportion of women who practise it. There seems to be no good reason for the longer sufferance by the mass of people of the carelessness and negligence of the few. We are aware that this subject has frequently engaged the attention of your Board, and that action has been delayed because of certain difficulties inherent in the problem, but we believe that the time has now arrived when the people of the City of New York will heartily support the adoption of such sanitary regulations as may seem necessary and expedient for the abatement of this widespread nuisance and source of danger."

The results of an investigation to determine the distribution of tuberculosis in New York City demonstrates, by statistical tables and maps, that consumption is unquestionably a communicable disease. It

is not generally diffused, but is confined chiefly to the old and densely populated parts. In consequence of its distribution, and the fact that it is a germ disease, there is good reason to believe that the necessary sanitary measures will prevent the diffusion and lower the death rate; and these observations are fully confirmed and by the experience of others, both in this country and in Europe.

Attention is directed to the Fourth Ward. In a total number of 933 dwellings, with a population of 18,323, or 27.6 persons per house, 248 houses, or 37.5 per cent, were infected with tuberculosis. In the 248 houses there were 341 cases in three years (218 cases per house), 173 cases in 1894, 121 cases in 1895, and 207 cases in 1896-97. The average number of cases to the house for the whole ward (933 houses) was 0.81. The cases include deaths as well as reported living cases of tuberculosis. The list, however, is not complete, as there was no compulsory return of cases, and only a small proportion, namely, of the actual number were returned. The increase in the number of cases in 1896 is probably only apparent, as the returns were more promptly made during this than the two previous years. But it is evident that in the three years—1894 to 1896, inclusive—only a small proportion of the cases reported were returned. It is also seen that some streets have a greater number of infected houses than others, and that this remains so year after year.

Sixth Ward Cases.
In a total of 620 dwellings in the Sixth Ward, with a population of 26,3 persons a house, 463 cases, or 0.72 a house for the whole ward, were reported. These cases occurred in 239 houses or 37.5 per cent of the number of houses in the ward. It is suggested by the Board of Health that among the most pressing needs of the future is a hospital for the treatment of advanced cases situated outside of New York, preferably in the phos of Long Island. The special hospital for the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis now existing in this city are not free public hospitals and are unable to meet the demands upon them by the poor.

The Department of Public Charities is not able to provide separate accommodations, excepting to the most limited extent, even for advanced cases, and as a result actual isolation does not exist in any of the hospitals. The same is true of Brooklyn. In every one of the institutions of the Departments of Charities and Corrections consumptives are found occupying beds in the general wards of the various hospitals, associated with healthy prisoners in cells and the greatly overcrowded workrooms of the workshops and penal institutions. Many of these cases are proclaimed now by the Health authorities to be actual and constant sources of danger.

On the subject of the prevalence of consumption in such institutions and the lack of precaution against a general spread of the disease, the Health Board says:

"A communication has been referred recently to this Board by the honorable Commissioner of Corrections regarding numerous cases of pulmonary tuberculosis which exist in the workshops, with the inquiry whether this department could not, in some way, care for them. An investigation has shown that there are many cases of pulmonary tuberculosis among the inmates of the workshop; that these are, in part, in the hospital wards, and in part are among the well inmates in the sewing and work rooms, which are badly ventilated, dusty and excessively over-crowded. It was found that in these rooms there were no sanitary provisions whatsoever in regard to the expectation, and the most favorable conditions existed for the transmission of the disease.

"Over 2,200 cases have been reported to this Board as admitted during the past year to the various institutions under the charge of the Department of Charities, and 900 cases in addition have been treated in the various dispensaries under the charge of the Department of Charities.

Need for Hospitals.

"The importance of provision for the separate care of persons suffering from other forms of communicable disease has long been universally admitted, and the maintenance of separate hospitals for these diseases is justly recognized as one of the most effective of the sanitary measures for securing public safety. There are most urgent reasons why similar measures should be adopted in dealing with pulmonary tuberculosis.

"A large experience in this matter has shown that in institutions devoted solely to the care of consumptives, the general

welfare of the patients is more easily fostered, the risks of fresh infections more certainly diminished and the chances for recovery more surely enhanced than in general hospitals in which all classes of cases are received.

"We believe that such an institution in charge of the Health Department would secure all these advantages without encroaching in any way upon the province of the institutions now caring for such patients and would contribute, as no other means can, to the success of the endeavor of the department, now pursued in the face of hopeless obstacles, to curtail the ravages of pulmonary tuberculosis in New York."

SUGGESTIONS FOR LAWS AND PRECAUTIONS.

With the report of the Board of Health are included several reports of officers and experts of the Health Department. One of these sub-reports, submitted by Dr. Arthur R. Guerd, Assistant Bacteriologist, gives the following recommendations for regulations or laws to prevent the spread of pulmonary tuberculosis and advice to people who have the disease and those who associate with them.

Under the first head, laws or regulations:

1. "The ultimate inclusion, when public opinion is ripe for that step, of consumption in the list of notifiable diseases.

2. "Public and official announcement of the fact that, in the event of a person having died of consumption, the rooms occupied by him will be disinfected by the sanitary authorities free of charge. The facilities for disinfection should extend to any dwelling which has been tenanted by a consumptive person, and should be enforced in the case of hotels and lodgings at health inspectors requested by sufferers from chest diseases.

3. "The passing of an act making it illegal to let any house or room in which any person within two months has suffered with consumption without having such room properly disinfected.

4. "To make it a punishable offence by fine or imprisonment, for any person letting a room or house wilfully to conceal or deny that there has been consumption in the house.

5. "To call the attention of shipping agents to the fact that there is danger to a healthy person in occupying the same cabin with a consumptive, especially on long voyages, and when, from the inclemency of the weather the passengers are not much on deck.

6. "To make it compulsory for a consumptive taking a long voyage by sea to notify the nature of his complaint before starting.

7. "To call the attention of railway companies on lines connected with well known health resorts for consumptives, to the necessity for having sleeping carriages carefully cleaned with some disinfecting solution and above all thoroughly aired.

8. "The removal of hospitals for consumptives in large cities to some convenient and open suburb.

9. "The exercise of greater care in the inspection of carcasses intended for food, and the compulsory rejection of those indicating tubercular disease.

10. "The rejection, as an article of fluid food, of the milk of tubercular cows.

11. "The inspection of herds by paid officials, with the view of destroying tubercular disease, and isolating or destroying tubercular animals.

12. "The prevention of overcrowding amongst animals intended for consumption as food.

13. "The prevention of overcrowding amongst people, by regulating the amount of cubic space allotted to each person in common lodging houses, workshops, etc.

14. "Back-to-back houses should be condemned, and the height of houses in cities should be in proportion to the width of the streets.

15. "Blind alleys should be opened out, and the custom of building houses at right angles to the length of the streets should be forbidden.

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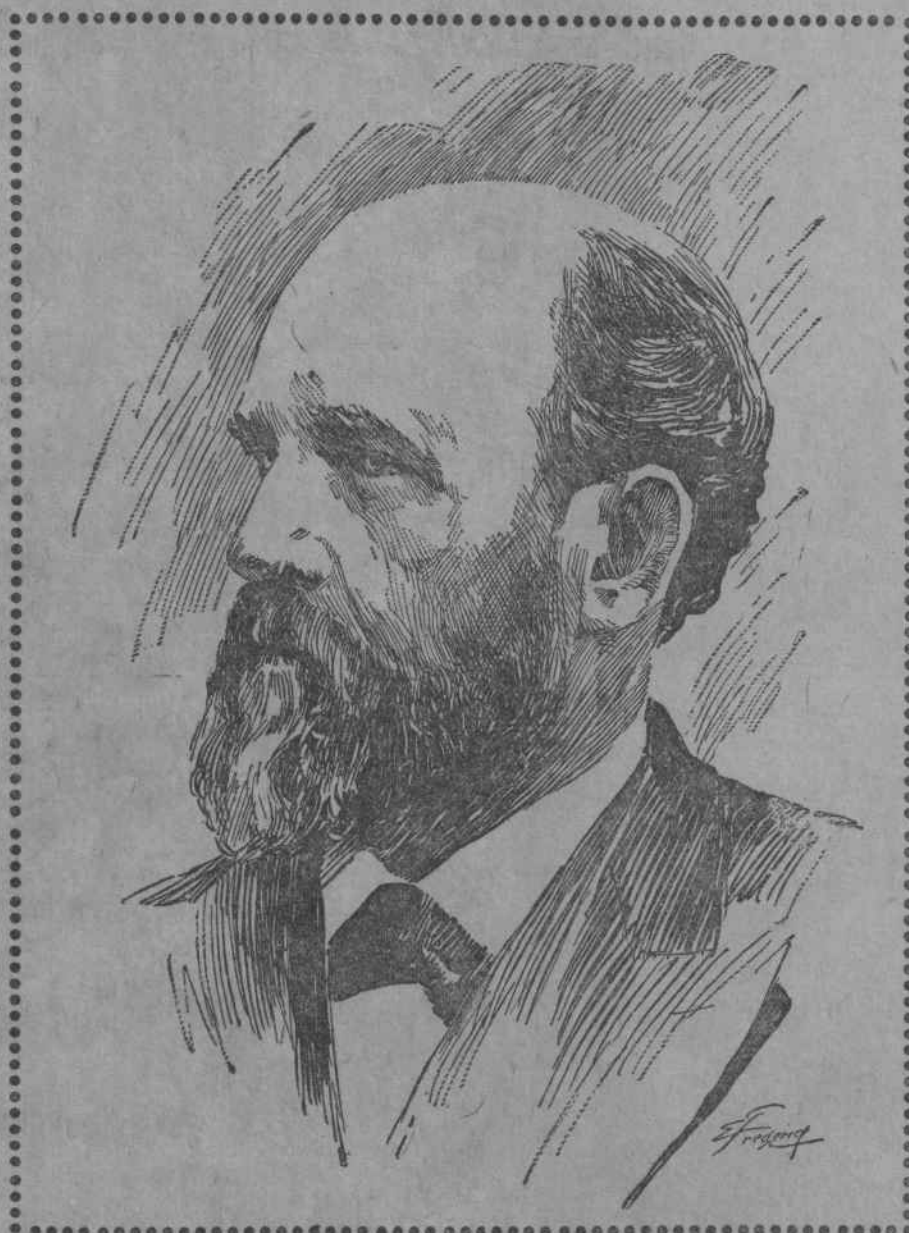
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